



International higher education student satisfaction  
with accommodation in Australia

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Australian Education International

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# Executive Summary

Each year, Australia plays host to more than 400,000 international students from around the world. Research shows that most of these international students are satisfied with their living and study experiences in Australia. Australian Education International published an overview report on the latest international student survey in April 2013, providing headline results on the experience of international higher education, vocational education and training, schools and English language students<sup>1</sup>.

One of the elements of the international student experience covered in the overview report is satisfaction with accommodation. Access to safe, suitable accommodation is a key component in ensuring a positive student experience.

The focus of this report is on the satisfaction levels of the more than 37,000 international higher education students who responded to the 2012 international student survey, and their views on accommodation in Australia. Satisfaction in this report is examined by nationality, level of study and type of accommodation.

Overall, 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their accommodation, in line with the international benchmark for this measure (85 per cent). More than 85 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to accommodation (there is no comparable international benchmark for this measure).

Just over half (51 per cent) of respondents were satisfied with the cost of accommodation, a result slightly lower than the international benchmark measure of 59 per cent, reflecting the high ongoing value of the Australian dollar and the comparatively high cost of accommodation in Australia.

Most students felt safe in their accommodation, with 94 per cent feeling safe. As with access to accommodation, there is no comparable international benchmark for this measure.

The majority of students (77 per cent) were happy with access to internet in their place of accommodation, slightly below the international benchmark figure of 81 per cent.

Accommodation office services provided by Australian universities were highly regarded by students who used them (84 per cent satisfaction, higher than the international benchmark of 80 per cent), although usage of these services was relatively low. The report explores the preferred methods of communication for learning about accommodation office services, providing information to universities to increase awareness of these services.

This report shows that a large majority of respondents were satisfied with their student accommodation, in terms of safety, access, quality, and access to internet services, and that Australia is generally performing at or above international benchmarks in terms of providing accommodation to international students.

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<sup>1</sup> AEI 2013

# Introduction

As part of the Council of Australian Governments' *International Student Strategy for Australia (ISSA)*, Australian Education International (AEI), the international education, science and research arm of the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, conducts surveys of international students to investigate the expectations and experiences of students studying in Australia.

The most recent such survey was conducted by AEI in 2012, and covered international students studying in the higher education, vocational education and training, schools and English language sectors. Headline results from this survey can be found in the AEI publication *International Student Survey 2012 Overview Report*<sup>2</sup>.

The international student surveys conducted by AEI contain a wealth of information, covering the views of tens of thousands of international students across a broad range of areas related to their living and studying experiences in Australia, including accommodation, the focus of this report.

As the ISSA notes, secure accommodation is one of the mechanisms that supports a sense of wellbeing for international students, and helps international students to have a high-quality experience during their time living and studying in Australia<sup>3</sup>. The ISSA also notes that better information can help education providers and accommodation providers meet the needs of international students<sup>4</sup>.

Research has found that academic performance is positively correlated with satisfaction with accommodation<sup>5</sup>, so providing suitable accommodation can improve the academic experience of international students as well as supporting their living experience in Australia.

Like other countries<sup>6</sup>, affordable accommodation has been a pressure point for Australia's international education sector. In 2010, Marginson et al included a chapter on housing in their book *International Student Safety*<sup>7</sup>, quoting a 2006 AEI survey<sup>8</sup> of international students finding that only 64 per cent of respondents thought that their housing arrangements were satisfactory. Although the recent 2012 survey used a different methodology, the finding that over 84 per cent of higher education respondents were satisfied with the quality of their accommodation in Australia suggests the situation has improved since 2006.

Accommodation was one of the issues raised by the second International Student Roundtable in August 2011, in the context of the different cost of living pressures experienced by international students. The Communiqué coming out of the roundtable included a proposal to increase affordable student accommodation<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> AEI 2013

<sup>3</sup> COAG 2010

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Mather, J 2012

<sup>6</sup> International student surveys in the UK between 2006 and 2011 found satisfaction with accommodation costs ranging from 46 per cent to 48 per cent – see i-graduate 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Marginson et al 2010

<sup>8</sup> AEI 2007

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.aei.gov.au/News/Latest-News/Documents/ISR%202011%20Communique.pdf>

In a keynote address to the 2012 Council of International Students Australia National Conference in July 2012, the then Parliamentary Secretary for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon Sharon Bird MP, noted that the Australian Government was addressing concerns about the shortage of affordable accommodation in Australia through supporting projects for housing students, through its investment in tertiary education infrastructure and through the National Rental Affordability Scheme<sup>10</sup> (which is jointly funded by the Australian and state and territory governments).

The Australian Human Rights Commission launched their *Principles to promote and protect the human rights of international students* in October 2012. Under the first principle, 'Enhancing the human rights of international students', stakeholders are encouraged to "pursue affordable and safe accommodation options for international students."<sup>11</sup>

The International Education Advisory Council's advice to the Australian Government, *Australia – Education Globally*, also looked at the issue of affordable and safe accommodation for international students, including making a recommendation about reviewing off-campus accommodation<sup>12</sup>.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments and individual providers have taken a number of steps to address the issue of providing access to safe, affordable quality accommodation for international students. This report looks at the latest available information from international higher education students (the largest cohort of international students in Australia) about their satisfaction with a number of different aspects of accommodation, using results from the AEI 2012 International Student Survey to provide better information to both education and accommodation providers.

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://minister.innovation.gov.au/sharonbird/Speeches/Pages/KeynoteaddressstotheCouncilofInternationalStudentsAustraliaNationalConference2012.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> AHRC 2012

<sup>12</sup> IEAC 2012

# Who responded to the 2012 International Student Survey?

The analysis in this report is based on responses from the more than 37,000 international higher education students who participated in the 2012 International Student Survey (the 2012 ISS). These 37,000 students came from 36 of Australia's universities, with responses received from universities in each state and territory. A little more than a quarter (28 per cent) of respondents had started their course within the four months preceding the survey.

The 2012 ISS was conducted using the International Student Barometer (ISB) developed by i-graduate. More than 700 higher education institutions around the world have participated in the ISB since 2005, enabling an international benchmark to be developed for a number of the measures used in this report. Where appropriate Australia's performance against this ISB benchmark is shown, although due to methodological reasons differences between the Australian results and the ISB benchmark are not necessarily statistically significant.

The two following tables show the number of respondents in the Australian survey by nationality, and level of study.

**Table 1. Respondents by nationality**

Nationality	Respondents	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of AEI data <sup>13</sup>
China	9,251	24.9%	39.7%
Malaysia	3,459	9.3%	7.7%
India	1,850	5.0%	4.5%
Singapore	1,798	4.8%	3.7%
Indonesia	1,750	4.7%	3.8%
Vietnam	1,720	4.6%	4.5%
Hong Kong	1,116	3.0%	1.0%
USA	1,098	3.0%	2.6%
South Korea	839	2.3%	3.6%
Canada	831	2.2%	1.6%
Other nationalities	13,403	36.1%	27.4%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>37,115</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The table above shows the number and proportion of respondents by nationality, as well as the proportion of enrolments represented by these nationalities in the AEI data. For comparative purposes, the AEI data used here are higher education and non-award enrolments as at 1 June 2012 (non-award enrolments are typically foundation or study abroad type enrolments<sup>14</sup>, and both higher education and non-award students were surveyed in the 2012 higher education ISS. Responses to the survey closed in June 2012, hence the use of data for enrolments as at 1 June 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Data is taken from the December 2012 AEI pivot table. Proportions do not add to 100 per cent due to rounding

<sup>14</sup> AEI 2012



With the exception of Chinese students, who are underrepresented in the survey, the proportion of survey respondents by nationality is broadly in line with the proportions of international student enrolments by nationality for the ten largest source countries.

**Table 2. Respondents by level of study**

<b>Level of study</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Proportion of respondents</b>
Undergraduate	19,908	53.6%
Postgraduate coursework	10,401	28.0%
Research	4,612	12.4%
Other	2,194	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,115</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

A little more than half of all respondents were undergraduate students, 28 per cent were postgraduate coursework students and 12 per cent were research students.

In the following tables, non-answers (blanks) have been excluded. The number of valid responses is shown for each table. As not all students answered every question, the number of responses for individual tables is usually smaller than the total number of responses to the survey. Where appropriate, the largest and smallest proportions for each category in the table are shaded.

State level data is shown in three tables. In these tables, the responses for Tasmania and the Northern Territory have been combined, as there is only one university in each of these locations.

# Types of accommodation

Survey respondents were asked to nominate the type of accommodation that they were staying in. Responses to this open ended question have been aggregated into four broad types of accommodation: on campus accommodation, home stay / host family, living with friends or family, and other off-campus accommodation. As noted above, in the table below (and in other relevant tables), the largest and smallest proportions for each category are shaded.

**Table 3. Accommodation type by nationality**

Nationality	Other off-campus accommodation	Living with friends or family	On campus accommodation	Home stay / host family
China	64.0%	23.4%	7.8%	4.9%
Malaysia	64.9%	21.2%	12.4%	1.5%
India	57.9%	32.1%	6.3%	3.6%
Singapore	65.6%	12.6%	20.0%	1.8%
Indonesia	69.0%	19.1%	6.4%	5.5%
Vietnam	56.2%	33.3%	4.4%	6.1%
Hong Kong	52.5%	28.5%	11.1%	7.8%
USA	57.2%	4.8%	37.2%	0.8%
South Korea	57.2%	24.2%	13.3%	5.3%
Canada	71.3%	7.9%	20.1%	0.7%
Other nationalities	69.1%	17.0%	10.8%	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>

35,710 respondents

Around two thirds of respondents were staying in other off-campus accommodation, ranging from just over half for Hong Kong students to more than 70 per cent for Canadian students. One in five students were living with friends or family, although for Vietnamese and Indian students this figure was much higher, at around one in three. Less than eight per cent of Canadian and five per cent of US students lived with friends or family.

Students staying in on campus accommodation tended to come from traditional English speaking countries, with more than one third of American and one in five Canadian respondents living on campus. In contrast, less than eight per cent of Chinese and four per cent of Vietnamese respondents were living in on campus accommodation.

Students staying in home stay or with host families were more likely to be from traditional non-English speaking countries, while virtually no students from English speaking countries chose this form of accommodation.

**Table 4. Self-reported level of English by type of accommodation**

Level of English	Other off-campus accommodation	Living with friends or family	On campus accommodation	Home stay / host family
Fluent or native	60.7%	18.5%	17.5%	3.2%
Confident	63.3%	21.8%	9.4%	5.5%
Still developing	58.5%	24.5%	11.4%	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.8%</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

9,997 respondents

Students who had started their course recently (within the last four months) were asked to report how confident they were with their level of English. The table above shows that respondents who thought their level of English was either fluent or native level were more than fifty per cent more likely to be staying in on campus accommodation than respondents who rated their level of English as still developing, and nearly fifty per cent less likely to be staying in home stay / host family situations.

**Table 5. Accommodation type by level of study**

Level of study	Other off-campus accommodation	Living with friends or family	On campus accommodation	Home stay / host family
Undergraduate	58.5%	23.9%	13.4%	4.2%
Postgraduate coursework	70.5%	18.2%	7.8%	3.5%
Research	81.8%	8.5%	8.0%	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

33,617 respondents

Undergraduate students were nearly twice as likely to be staying in on campus accommodation as postgraduate students, and were also more likely to be staying in home stay / host family situations. More than 80 per cent of research students stayed in other off-campus accommodation.

# Satisfaction with accommodation

There are a number of important elements to appropriate housing for international students, including the quality, availability, cost and safety of this accommodation. Research also suggests that access to high speed internet is also a very important element for student accommodation satisfaction<sup>15</sup>. Survey participants were asked a series of questions to determine their satisfaction with these various aspects of their accommodation.

## Quality of accommodation

Overall, 84 per cent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their accommodation. This is in line with the 2012 ISB result of 85 per cent satisfaction.

**Table 6. Satisfaction with quality of accommodation by nationality**

Nationality	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied*	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
China	15.6%	69.6%	85.2%	12.7%	2.1%
Malaysia	20.2%	67.4%	87.6%	10.9%	1.5%
India	26.1%	62.0%	88.1%	9.8%	2.1%
Singapore	20.6%	68.7%	89.3%	9.3%	1.4%
Indonesia	19.4%	69.9%	89.3%	9.8%	0.9%
Vietnam	13.1%	73.2%	86.3%	11.9%	1.8%
Hong Kong	20.7%	63.2%	83.9%	13.5%	2.6%
USA	24.3%	57.2%	81.5%	14.5%	4.0%
South Korea	17.9%	60.3%	78.2%	17.5%	4.3%
Canada	21.8%	58.8%	80.6%	15.2%	4.2%
Other nationalities	20.1%	61.7%	81.7%	14.7%	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

30,493 respondents

\*Sum of Very satisfied and satisfied scores

Satisfaction with the quality of accommodation varies by nationality, with respondents from Singapore the most satisfied, while respondents from South Korea were the least satisfied. More than a quarter of Indian respondents and around one in five respondents were very satisfied with the quality of their accommodation, while less than three per cent of all respondents were very dissatisfied.

<sup>15</sup> Mather, J 2012

**Table 7. Satisfaction with quality of accommodation by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	17.1%	66.0%	83.1%	14.3%	2.7%
Living with friends or family	22.0%	66.9%	88.8%	9.3%	1.8%
On campus accommodation	22.8%	60.7%	83.5%	13.1%	3.4%
Home stay / host family	27.4%	62.4%	89.8%	7.7%	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

30,436 respondents

Respondents staying in home stay / host family arrangements were the most satisfied with the quality of their accommodation, while students staying in other off-campus accommodation were the least satisfied, although more than 80 per cent of these respondents were satisfied with the quality.

**Table 8. Satisfaction with quality of accommodation by level of study**

Level of study	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Undergraduate	20.5%	64.7%	85.2%	12.3%	2.5%
Postgraduate coursework	18.0%	67.0%	84.9%	12.7%	2.4%
Research	15.6%	64.6%	80.2%	16.7%	3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

28,872 respondents

Undergraduate respondents were the most satisfied with the quality of their accommodation, while research students were the least satisfied, although again more than 80 per cent of research student respondents were satisfied with the quality of their accommodation.

## Accommodation and the learning experience

Previous research has shown a correlation between satisfaction with accommodation and academic performance<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 9. Satisfaction with quality of accommodation and quality of learning experience**

Quality of accommodation	Quality of learning experience				
	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Very satisfied	28.9%	60.0%	88.9%	8.2%	2.9%
Satisfied	10.6%	76.5%	87.1%	10.9%	2.0%
<i>Total satisfied</i>	<i>14.7%</i>	<i>72.8%</i>	<i>87.5%</i>	<i>10.3%</i>	<i>2.2%</i>
Dissatisfied	7.8%	70.1%	78.0%	19.1%	2.9%
Very dissatisfied	10.9%	49.9%	60.8%	26.7%	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>85.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

30,465 respondents

<sup>16</sup> Op cit.

The table above explores this correlation for participants in the 2012 ISS. Students who were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their accommodation were also more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their learning experience.

In particular, only 61 per cent of those very dissatisfied with the quality of their accommodation were satisfied with the quality of their learning experience, compared to 88 per cent of those who were very satisfied with the quality of their accommodation.

These findings support the findings of the earlier research that there is a positive correlation between satisfaction with accommodation and learning.

## Access to accommodation

As noted in the introduction, AEI's 2006 survey of 3,609 international higher education students found only 64 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the availability of suitable accommodation<sup>17</sup>. The results from the 2012 ISS are much better, with more than 85 per cent of respondents satisfied with access (access to accommodation is not covered in the ISB, so there is no comparable benchmark).

**Table 10. Satisfaction with access to accommodation by nationality**

Nationality	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
China	14.8%	71.8%	86.6%	11.3%	2.1%
Malaysia	18.0%	70.7%	88.8%	9.2%	2.0%
India	26.2%	61.9%	88.1%	9.3%	2.6%
Singapore	20.4%	72.0%	92.4%	6.1%	1.5%
Indonesia	18.9%	70.9%	89.8%	9.4%	0.8%
Vietnam	13.1%	75.1%	88.3%	10.1%	1.6%
Hong Kong	16.6%	70.4%	87.0%	10.7%	2.2%
USA	30.7%	55.8%	86.5%	9.8%	3.7%
South Korea	16.3%	60.5%	76.8%	18.9%	4.4%
Canada	23.2%	59.7%	82.9%	12.5%	4.6%
Other nationalities	19.6%	61.4%	81.1%	14.7%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>85.2%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

30,275 respondents

As with satisfaction with quality, satisfaction with access varied by nationality, with a variation of 16 percentage points between the most satisfied and least satisfied nationalities. Respondents from South Korea were the least satisfied at 77 per cent, while students from Singapore were the most satisfied at 92 per cent.

**Table 11. Satisfaction with access to accommodation by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	16.1%	67.0%	83.1%	13.6%	3.3%
Living with friends or family	20.0%	68.4%	88.3%	9.6%	2.1%
On campus accommodation	28.1%	62.5%	90.6%	7.2%	2.2%
Home stay / host family	22.3%	66.2%	88.5%	8.9%	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>85.2%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

30,220 respondents

Respondents living in on campus accommodation were the most satisfied with access to accommodation, while students living in other off campus accommodation were least satisfied.

<sup>17</sup> AEI 2007

**Table 12. Satisfaction with access to accommodation by level of study**

Level of study	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Undergraduate	20.1%	67.3%	87.3%	10.2%	2.5%
Postgraduate coursework	17.3%	67.1%	84.3%	12.7%	3.0%
Research	15.2%	62.9%	78.1%	17.4%	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>66.6%</b>	<b>85.2%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

28,662 respondents

Undergraduate respondents were more satisfied with access to accommodation than postgraduate or research students, with 22 per cent of research students being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with access to accommodation, suggesting that they have different needs and expectations in terms of accommodation options to undergraduates (who are typically younger, and often without accompanying families<sup>18</sup>).

**Table 13. Satisfaction with access to accommodation by state or territory**

State	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
NSW	16.2%	64.0%	80.2%	15.1%	4.7%
VIC	17.8%	68.2%	86.1%	11.4%	2.5%
QLD	21.0%	65.7%	86.6%	11.1%	2.2%
WA	18.8%	67.1%	86.0%	11.0%	3.0%
SA	19.2%	69.6%	88.8%	9.4%	1.8%
TAS/NT <sup>19</sup>	18.7%	65.5%	84.2%	13.4%	2.4%
ACT	19.5%	60.9%	80.4%	14.1%	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>85.2%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

30,275 respondents

Looking at access to accommodation by state or territory, there was little variation, with approximately nine percentage points separating the least and most satisfied states. Respondents studying in South Australia were the most satisfied with access to accommodation, while respondents in New South Wales were the least satisfied with their access to accommodation, although more than 80 per cent of respondents in each state and territory were satisfied or very satisfied with access to accommodation.

<sup>18</sup> While table 5 shows that research students were less likely to be living with friends or family, this is likely to mean that they are less likely to be living with older family (such as uncles or aunts already living in Australia), rather than living with their spouses or partners and/ or children.

<sup>19</sup> As noted above, responses have been combined for Tasmania and the Northern Territory, as there was only one institution in each location.



## Cost of accommodation

As Austrade's *Study in Australia* website notes, housing in Australia is expensive, with a shortage of affordable housing impacting both international visitors and Australian residents<sup>20</sup>. This is reflected by a low level of satisfaction with the cost of accommodation, with only 51 per cent of respondents satisfied with the cost of accommodation (the benchmark ISB result for satisfaction with cost of accommodation is also low, with only 59 per cent of respondents satisfied).

The *Study in Australia* website notes a number of suggestions for incoming international students, including utilising the accommodation offices of their institutions, as well as accessing accommodation websites<sup>21</sup>.

**Table 14. Satisfaction with cost of accommodation by nationality**

Nationality	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
China	8.9%	48.7%	57.6%	33.2%	9.2%
Malaysia	9.1%	42.1%	51.2%	35.9%	12.9%
India	14.7%	44.5%	59.3%	30.1%	10.6%
Singapore	7.4%	45.0%	52.4%	36.0%	11.6%
Indonesia	9.1%	45.2%	54.4%	35.5%	10.1%
Vietnam	8.9%	56.2%	65.0%	28.6%	6.4%
Hong Kong	11.5%	42.7%	54.2%	33.8%	12.0%
USA	7.3%	39.2%	46.5%	36.0%	17.5%
South Korea	9.0%	33.9%	42.9%	36.8%	20.4%
Canada	6.6%	31.6%	38.1%	39.7%	22.2%
Other nationalities	7.7%	36.6%	44.3%	36.6%	19.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

30,471 respondents

By nationality, students from Canada were the least satisfied with the cost of accommodation, while respondents from Vietnam were the most satisfied. Less than half of students from South Korea or the United States were satisfied. Overall, there was almost 27 percentage points difference between the least and most satisfied nationalities. The very low satisfaction levels for a number of countries, and particularly for Canada, could reflect a lack of up to date information on the costs of Australian accommodation in these countries, or they could simply be reflective of the comparatively high cost of accommodation in Australia.

<sup>20</sup> See <http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/en/Study-Costs/Accommodation/Accommodation-options-and-costs>

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

**Table 15. Satisfaction with cost of accommodation by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	7.3%	40.8%	48.2%	36.7%	15.2%
Living with friends or family	13.4%	49.5%	62.9%	27.8%	9.3%
On campus accommodation	7.2%	37.9%	45.1%	38.6%	16.3%
Home stay / host family	14.5%	49.6%	64.1%	27.2%	8.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

30,413 respondents

Respondents staying in home stay / host family type arrangements were the most satisfied with cost, while those staying in on campus accommodation were the least satisfied. This may suggest that the range of services provided by home stay / host families, which often include at least two meals a day as well as social interaction with Australian families, are appreciated by international students and perceived as value for money.

**Table 16. Satisfaction with cost of accommodation by level of study**

Level of study	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Undergraduate	9.4%	44.0%	53.4%	33.6%	12.9%
Postgraduate coursework	8.6%	41.8%	50.3%	35.9%	13.7%
Research	5.9%	36.0%	41.9%	38.5%	19.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>42.2%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>

28,849 respondents

Research students were least satisfied with the cost of accommodation, with 20 per cent very dissatisfied and 39 per cent dissatisfied. With 85 per cent of these students receiving scholarships or stipends from their home country, their institution or the Australian government, this may reflect concerns about the cost of accommodation relative to their stipends (18 per cent of undergraduate students reported receiving some form of scholarship or stipend).

**Table 17. Satisfaction with cost of accommodation by state or territory**

State	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
NSW	7.4%	38.2%	45.6%	35.9%	18.5%
VIC	8.4%	41.2%	49.6%	35.9%	14.5%
QLD	9.5%	42.6%	52.1%	35.2%	12.7%
WA	8.3%	45.1%	53.4%	33.3%	13.3%
SA	11.2%	51.0%	62.2%	30.4%	7.4%
TAS/NT	10.0%	43.6%	53.7%	35.2%	11.1%
ACT	6.6%	38.9%	45.5%	36.3%	18.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>51.1%</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>

30,471 respondents

Satisfaction with cost of accommodation was low for most states and territories, with less than half of respondents in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Victoria satisfied. Nearly 20 per cent of respondents in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory were very dissatisfied. Respondents from South Australia were most satisfied, with 62 per cent satisfied with the cost of accommodation.

## Safety of accommodation

Student wellbeing is one of the central elements of the ISSA. Feeling safe and secure in a student's place of accommodation is an important part of student wellbeing. International students were asked a series of questions in the 2012 ISS about how safe they felt in different areas, including in their place of accommodation.

Most students felt safe in their place of accommodation, with 94 per cent of respondents feeling safe. This proportion is substantially higher than the proportion of higher education respondents feeling safe over all in the 2012 ISS (84 per cent)<sup>22</sup>, suggesting that most respondents feel relatively safe in their place of accommodation. The ISB does not ask questions about safety in accommodation, so there is no ISB benchmark for this measure; however a 2006 ABS survey found that 89 per cent of Australian respondents felt safe at home alone after dark<sup>23</sup>.

**Table 18. Feeling safe in accommodation by nationality**

Nationality	Very safe	Fairly safe	Total safe	Not particularly safe	Not safe at all
China	33.0%	57.5%	90.6%	8.5%	1.0%
Malaysia	34.7%	57.2%	91.8%	7.2%	1.0%
India	63.3%	33.8%	97.1%	2.4%	0.5%
Singapore	43.2%	51.1%	94.3%	5.0%	0.7%
Indonesia	45.2%	50.5%	95.7%	3.9%	0.4%
Vietnam	40.5%	52.2%	92.7%	6.1%	1.2%
Hong Kong	35.0%	55.4%	90.4%	7.8%	1.8%
USA	74.7%	23.6%	98.2%	1.6%	0.2%
South Korea	33.1%	55.1%	88.2%	10.6%	1.2%
Canada	66.6%	30.5%	97.0%	2.6%	0.4%
Other nationalities	58.7%	37.4%	96.0%	3.5%	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

31,640 respondents

The vast majority of respondents felt fairly or very safe in their place of accommodation, although 11 per cent of South Korean respondents stated that they thought their accommodation was not particularly safe, and 2 per cent of Hong Kong respondents thought that their accommodation was not safe at all. Students from the United States, India and Canada felt safest in their accommodation, while respondents from South Korea, Hong Kong and China felt least safe (although more than 88 per cent of each group felt safe).

<sup>22</sup> AEI 2013

<sup>23</sup> ABS 2006. A subsequent survey was conducted in 2012, with results expected in late 2013.

**Table 19. Feeling safe in accommodation by accommodation type**

Type of accommodation	Very safe	Fairly safe	Total safe	Not particularly safe	Not safe at all
Other off-campus accommodation	44.9%	48.5%	93.5%	5.8%	0.7%
Living at home with friends or family	46.2%	47.4%	93.6%	5.5%	0.9%
On campus accommodation	59.3%	35.9%	95.2%	3.9%	0.9%
Home stay / host family	54.4%	41.3%	95.7%	4.1%	0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

31,573 respondents

Respondents living in home stay / host family arrangements or in on campus accommodation tended to feel slightly safer than respondents living in other types of accommodation, although most respondents felt fairly or very safe, regardless of the type of accommodation.

**Table 20. Feeling safe in accommodation by level of study**

Level of study	Very safe	Fairly safe	Total safe	Not particularly safe	Not safe at all
Undergraduate	45.2%	47.9%	93.1%	6.0%	0.9%
Postgraduate coursework	49.6%	44.9%	94.5%	4.9%	0.5%
Research	48.1%	46.5%	94.6%	4.8%	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>46.8%</b>	<b>93.7%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

29,921 respondents

Again, most respondents felt safe in their place of accommodation, regardless of their level of study, although research respondents felt safest overall.

**Table 21. Feeling safe in accommodation by state or territory**

State	Very safe	Fairly safe	Total safe	Not particularly safe	Not safe at all
NSW	41.9%	49.8%	91.8%	7.2%	1.1%
VIC	47.1%	46.7%	93.8%	5.5%	0.7%
QLD	52.6%	43.2%	95.8%	3.8%	0.4%
WA	43.7%	47.2%	90.9%	7.9%	1.2%
SA	46.3%	48.9%	95.2%	4.3%	0.5%
TAS/NT	47.8%	46.4%	94.1%	5.3%	0.5%
ACT	54.6%	41.0%	95.5%	3.9%	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

31,640 respondents

Safety satisfaction levels were consistently high across all states and territories, with at least 91 per cent of all respondents feeling safe in each location. Respondents in Queensland felt safest overall.

## Internet access in accommodation

As Mather reported<sup>24</sup>, an online survey by JWT Education in December 2011 and January 2012 found that access to high speed internet was one of the key priorities for university students (the survey noted that 56 per cent of the 3,800 participating students nominated internet access as their most pressing need).

Overall, 77 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their internet access in their place of accommodation. This result is slightly lower than the ISB benchmark of 81 per cent and the 2011 figure for the UK (82 per cent<sup>25</sup>), and ahead of the 2011 figure for NZ (73 per cent<sup>26</sup>).

**Table 22. Satisfaction with internet access in accommodation by nationality**

Nationality	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
China	15.3%	64.5%	79.9%	15.3%	4.9%
Malaysia	22.2%	57.0%	79.1%	14.9%	5.9%
India	31.3%	56.0%	87.2%	8.5%	4.3%
Singapore	18.5%	57.5%	76.1%	16.8%	7.2%
Indonesia	23.9%	57.1%	81.0%	14.2%	4.8%
Vietnam	15.6%	63.9%	79.6%	16.4%	4.1%
Hong Kong	18.4%	53.7%	72.0%	18.4%	9.6%
USA	16.7%	40.0%	56.7%	25.3%	18.0%
South Korea	18.7%	48.9%	67.6%	20.0%	12.4%
Canada	15.8%	47.4%	63.2%	21.3%	15.5%
Other nationalities	23.0%	52.1%	75.1%	16.1%	8.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

30,309 respondents

Students from India were most satisfied with internet access in their accommodation, while students from the United States and from Canada were least satisfied. Nearly 20 per cent of respondents from the United States were very dissatisfied, while 31 per cent of Indian respondents were very satisfied.

**Table 23. Satisfaction with internet access in accommodation by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	19.4%	57.1%	76.5%	16.3%	7.1%
Living with friends or family	23.0%	61.8%	84.8%	11.7%	3.6%
On campus accommodation	18.2%	44.4%	62.6%	22.1%	15.3%
Home stay / host family	25.7%	58.7%	84.3%	11.1%	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

30,253 respondents

<sup>24</sup> Mather, J 2012

<sup>25</sup> i-graduate 2011

<sup>26</sup> MOE 2011

There was considerable variation in satisfaction with internet by type of accommodation, with respondents living in on campus accommodation the least satisfied, with 15 per cent very dissatisfied. Respondents living with friends or family were most satisfied, while respondents living in home stay / host family arrangements were also highly satisfied, with more than 25 per cent very satisfied and 84 per cent in total satisfied. This suggests that there is room for universities to improve internet access through their on campus accommodation.

**Table 24. Satisfaction with internet access in accommodation by level of study**

<b>Level of study</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Total satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>
Undergraduate	20.4%	56.1%	76.5%	15.6%	7.9%
Postgraduate coursework	20.5%	57.3%	77.8%	15.5%	6.7%
Research	19.0%	55.6%	74.7%	18.8%	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

28,678 respondents

There was very little variation in responses to satisfaction with internet access in accommodation by level of study, with three quarters of respondents from each level of study being satisfied with access.

# Accommodation offices

International students use a number of different sources of information to help them to find and arrange accommodation for their studies in Australia. Some international students use the accommodation offices provided by their universities, while others use friends or family networks, or accommodation related websites such as realestate.com.au or gumtree.com.au.

Standard 6.3 of the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) National Code Part D requires international education providers to provide the opportunity for students to access welfare-related support services, including assistance with accommodation issues<sup>27</sup>.

One of the findings from the 2010 ISS was that while international students who used services offered by universities tended to have high levels of satisfaction with those services, nearly a quarter of international higher education students were unaware of the presence of a university accommodation office - and would have used that office if they were aware<sup>28</sup>.

In 2012, respondents who used their institution's accommodation office again had very high levels of satisfaction (84 per cent, higher than the ISB benchmark of 80 per cent), although again usage was relatively low with only 23 per cent of respondents using this service.

The table below looks at awareness and usage of accommodation offices from the 2012 ISS.

**Table 25. Awareness and usage of accommodation offices by nationality**

Nationality	I have used this service	I know where this service is but I haven't used it	It may be useful to me but I don't know where to find it	Not applicable or not relevant to me
China	18.8%	35.7%	29.3%	16.2%
Malaysia	24.8%	31.9%	17.2%	26.2%
India	21.3%	37.3%	20.0%	21.4%
Singapore	25.1%	34.7%	18.4%	21.8%
Indonesia	21.4%	39.3%	19.9%	19.3%
Vietnam	17.9%	39.9%	20.2%	22.0%
Hong Kong	18.9%	33.5%	23.8%	23.8%
USA	29.9%	19.6%	17.0%	33.5%
South Korea	19.6%	24.8%	28.9%	26.7%
Canada	23.3%	20.3%	16.4%	40.0%
Other nationalities	25.3%	27.4%	20.1%	27.2%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>

31,560 respondents

Less than one in five of respondents from China, Vietnam, Hong Kong or South Korea used university accommodation offices, while almost 30 per cent of American students used this service. Almost 30 per cent of Chinese and South Korean respondents did not know where their university's accommodation office was, but thought that such a service might be useful to them.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.aei.gov.au/Regulatory-Information/Education-Services-for-Overseas-Students-ESOS-Legislative-Framework/National-Code/nationalcodepartd/Pages/ExplanatoryguideD6.aspx>

<sup>28</sup> Lawson, C 2012

**Table 26. Awareness and usage of accommodation office by level of study**

Level of study	I have used this service	I know where this service is but I haven't used it	It may be useful to me but I don't know where to find it	Not applicable or not relevant to me
Undergraduate	21.5%	31.4%	22.7%	24.4%
Postgraduate coursework	21.5%	32.3%	22.9%	23.3%
Research	30.7%	31.7%	17.1%	20.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>

29,834 respondents

Research student respondents were the most likely to make use of accommodation offices offered by their institutions, while postgraduate coursework respondents were the least likely to make use of them, and were also most likely to not know where to find such an accommodation office.

**Table 27. Awareness and usage of accommodation office by self-reported level of English**

Level of English	I have used this service	I know where this service is but I haven't used it	It may be useful to me but I don't know where to find it	Not applicable or not relevant to me
Fluent or native	22.1%	25.1%	18.8%	34.0%
Confident	20.6%	33.3%	24.7%	21.4%
Still developing	18.3%	33.1%	30.4%	18.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>31.1%</b>	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>

8,312 respondents

While there was little variation in terms of usage of accommodation offices by self-reported level of English, those respondents who thought that they were fluent or native were slightly more likely to use the service, while those who reported still developing their English were slightly less likely to use accommodation offices. Respondents still developing their English were nearly twice as likely as fluent English speakers to not know where an institution's accommodation office was, but to think that such a service might be useful to them.

## Preferred mediums of communication about accommodation offices

Focus group research by AEI found that international students utilise a range of different methods to find out information of interest to them<sup>29</sup>. As a result of the findings of the AEI research, the 2012 ISS introduced a series of new questions designed to find out the preferred method of communication for students to find out about different services offered by institutions. The results of the new question related to accommodation are shown below.

<sup>29</sup> Op cit.



**Table 28. How students want to learn about accommodation office services by nationality**

Nationality	Via Email	Institution website	Virtual Learning Environment <sup>30</sup>	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter
China	67.9%	21.0%	6.5%	3.3%	0.8%	0.5%
Malaysia	64.7%	21.6%	7.9%	5.1%	0.4%	0.3%
India	66.0%	23.7%	5.9%	4.0%	0.3%	0.1%
Singapore	66.5%	21.3%	7.4%	4.2%	0.4%	0.1%
Indonesia	63.6%	23.7%	7.4%	4.7%	0.3%	0.3%
Vietnam	67.0%	21.0%	5.7%	5.8%	0.5%	0.1%
Hong Kong	63.1%	18.4%	7.5%	10.1%	0.8%	0.1%
USA	65.1%	25.1%	7.4%	2.3%	0.0%	0.1%
South Korea	70.3%	16.9%	6.8%	5.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Canada	60.7%	29.1%	7.8%	1.7%	0.5%	0.1%
Other nationalities	64.6%	24.7%	6.8%	3.1%	0.4%	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

31,645 respondents

Two thirds of respondents nominated email as their preferred medium of communication for hearing about accommodation office services provided by their university, however this proportion varied by nationality, and a further one third of respondents nominated a different medium of communication. While 70 per cent of South Korean respondents nominated email, nearly 30 per cent of Canadians nominated their institution website, 8 per cent of Malaysians nominated virtual learning environments, and 10 per cent of Hong Kong respondents nominated Facebook.

**Table 29. How students want to learn about accommodation office services by level of study**

Level of study	Via Email	Institution website	Virtual Learning Environment	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter
Undergraduate	65.7%	21.0%	7.7%	4.6%	0.6%	0.3%
Postgraduate coursework	64.4%	24.5%	7.1%	3.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Research	69.0%	26.2%	2.4%	2.0%	0.3%	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.8%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

29,972 respondents

Research student respondents were more likely to want to learn about accommodation office services through email or their institution website, and less likely to want to learn about this service through virtual learning environments or Facebook. Conversely, undergraduate respondents were three times as likely as research students to want to learn through virtual learning environments and twice as likely as research students to want to learn through Facebook, although email was still the most popular choice.

<sup>30</sup> Virtual learning environments include such tools as Blackboard, WebCT, WebLearn and Stream.

**Table 30. How students want to learn about accommodation office services by self-reported level of English**

Level of English	Via Email	Institution website	Virtual Learning Environment	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter
Fluent or native	66.9%	21.1%	8.1%	3.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Confident	66.7%	21.7%	7.0%	3.9%	0.5%	0.2%
Still developing	66.1%	19.6%	8.0%	4.5%	1.1%	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

8,376 respondents

The self-reported level of English of respondents made very little difference on their preferred way of receiving information about accommodation office services.

These findings reinforce the importance of institutions using a range of different channels of communication to reach their international students, to ensure that students can access relevant information through the method that they are comfortable with.

## Orientation programs and usage of accommodation offices

Orientation programs conducted by universities are one of the main opportunities that institutions have to inform new students about the range of services that they provide, including accommodation offices.

**Table 31. Orientation programs and usage of accommodation offices**

Satisfaction with university orientation	Usage of accommodation office			
	I have used this service	I know where this service is but I haven't used it	It may be useful to me but I don't know where to find it	Not applicable or not relevant to me
Very satisfied	26.4%	34.5%	17.8%	21.3%
Satisfied	19.4%	32.4%	25.4%	22.8%
<i>Total satisfied</i>	21.4%	33.0%	23.2%	22.4%
Dissatisfied	18.3%	23.5%	31.1%	27.1%
Very dissatisfied	20.9%	21.3%	27.5%	30.3%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>

7,546 respondents

The table above looks at the relationship between satisfaction with the university's orientation program (for those international students who had commenced their course in the four months before they participated in the survey) and usage of their institution's accommodation office.

Nearly 90 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their orientation program, and these students were more likely to use or be aware of their institution's accommodation office than those who were dissatisfied with their university orientation program. Satisfied respondents were also more likely to find their university's accommodation office to be applicable or relevant, suggesting that the role of the accommodation office was explained well to these students.

## Satisfaction with accommodation office services

As table 25 shows, 22.6 per cent of respondents had made use of the accommodation office services offered by their university. These students were asked how satisfied they were with the services provided by their accommodation office.

**Table 32. Satisfaction with accommodation office services**

Accommodation Office	Proportion of respondents	Number of respondents
Very satisfied	23.6%	1,669
Satisfied	60.5%	4,278
<i>Total satisfied</i>	<i>84.1%</i>	
Dissatisfied	11.4%	803
Very dissatisfied	4.5%	318
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,068</b>

Consistent with the findings from the 2010 ISS, a large majority of international students who made use of the accommodation office services provided by their university were satisfied, although 16 per cent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

These high levels of satisfaction suggest that if institutions continue to improve the way they promote their services such as accommodation offices, they will be able to provide useful services to those students who need this type of support.

# Opportunities for interaction

One of the main attractions for international students studying abroad is the chance to make friends with other people, whether it be people from the host country, other countries or the student's own country<sup>31</sup>. The type of accommodation that a student lives in can influence their ability to make friends as shown below.

**Table 33. Satisfaction with making friends from Australia by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	15.4%	53.9%	69.4%	23.8%	6.8%
Living with friends or family	17.7%	55.9%	73.6%	20.8%	5.7%
On campus accommodation	25.7%	52.4%	78.0%	17.6%	4.4%
Home stay / host family	18.4%	52.5%	71.0%	22.2%	6.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>54.1%</b>	<b>71.3%</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

31,337 respondents

On the whole, respondents living in on campus accommodation were most satisfied with their ability to make friends with Australians, while those living in other off-campus accommodation were the least satisfied.

**Table 34. Satisfaction with making friends from other countries by type of accommodation**

Type of accommodation	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Total satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Other off-campus accommodation	20.2%	65.8%	86.0%	12.0%	1.9%
Living with friends or family	20.9%	65.8%	86.7%	11.2%	2.1%
On campus accommodation	30.5%	60.1%	90.6%	7.9%	1.5%
Home stay / host family	22.2%	63.5%	85.7%	12.7%	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.6%</b>	<b>65.1%</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

31,378 respondents

Again, respondents living in on campus accommodation were most satisfied with making friends from other countries, while in this case respondents living in home stay / host family arrangements were least satisfied – although more than 85 per cent of these respondents were satisfied with their opportunities to make friends.

<sup>31</sup> Lawson, C 2012

**Table 35. Satisfaction with making friends from home country by type of accommodation**

<b>Type of accommodation</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Total satisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>
Other off-campus accommodation	21.6%	66.9%	88.5%	9.3%	2.2%
Living with friends or family	22.8%	66.9%	89.7%	8.3%	2.0%
On campus accommodation	26.3%	61.8%	88.0%	8.8%	3.2%
Home stay / host family	24.6%	62.1%	86.6%	10.8%	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

29,849 respondents

Respondents living with friends or family were most satisfied with their opportunities to make friends from their home country, while respondents living in home stay / host family arrangements were least satisfied – although again, satisfaction levels were high for all groups, with more than 86 per cent satisfied.

# Conclusions

This report has looked at a range of different measures of satisfaction with areas relating to accommodation for international higher education students. With the exception of cost, which remains an issue, a large majority of respondents were satisfied with their student accommodation, in terms of safety, access, quality, and access to internet services.

Where international comparisons are available, Australia is generally performing at or above international benchmarks, suggesting that Australian education providers are largely doing a good job in terms of providing appropriate accommodation to international students.

This report provides a useful baseline for assessing the provision of affordable and safe accommodation for international higher education students, with the initial results suggesting that Australia's housing for international higher education students meets or exceeds most international benchmarks.

The cost of accommodation remains the most pressing issue, as it does for other countries; however the Australian government, state and territory governments and providers continue to make efforts to address the cost of accommodation, and the updating of the basic rate of living costs for student visas and improved provision of information under the ISSA mean that students now have a more realistic understanding of the cost of living, and the cost of accommodation, before they arrive in Australia.

The report also provides information to universities on how different groups of students prefer to learn about accommodation services, which should help universities to make a wider range of students aware of the accommodation services that they offer.

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